Mittelplate: 25 million tons of crude produced by Germany's largest oil field

- Up to 25 million tons of oil still recoverable


New milestone in the development of the Mittelplate oil field off the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein: On 23 October 2010 the 25-millionth ton of crude was produced from the reservoir. Since October 1987, RWE Dea (operator) and Wintershall Holding GmbH (partner) have developed the most significant German oil deposit. The production of up to 25 million additional tons of oil – i.e. a comparable volume – is considered to be technically and commercially feasible in future, based on today's criteria.

"With our successful and safe production operations in the Mittelplate oil field, we are making a contribution of our own to a secure supply from domestic sources," says Thomas Rappuhn, Chief Executive Officer of RWE Dea AG, gratified by this production anniversary. The Mittelplate oil field accommodates over 50 percent of the Germany's oil reserves. Since crude oil – the classical primary energy source – will continue to be an indispensable component of a balanced energy mix in the forthcoming decades and will also be used for a broad spectrum of applications beyond heating and fuel, domestic reserves should be put to optimum use, according to Rappuhn.

The Mittelplate reservoir is being developed both by the drilling and production island of the same name and from onshore. It was possible to boost the annual production volume continually from the outset, and it subsequently dropped slightly owing to the natural production decline of this particular field. At present, it amounts to about 1.4 million tons of oil p.a. In terms of scale, this volume is equivalent, for instance, to imports from countries like Saudi-Arabia (2009: 1.4 million tons).

Given an expected natural decline of the production volume following many years of production, it can be assumed that it will be possible for oil to be successfully produced from this reservoir for a long period of time. Against this backdrop, in May 2010 the State Department for Mining, Energy and Geology had extended the production permit for the development of the oil field by a further 30 years, until the end of 2041; the permit had originally been scheduled to expire at the end of 2011. Ralf to Baben, Chief Operations Officer at RWE Dea AG: "We consider this renewal the confirmation of our drilling, production and transportation concept, a system that has set international benchmarks, as well as of our high safety standards. In the past 23 years, we have proved that economic interests, nature conservation and responsible actions are also compatible with one another in a sensitive ecosystem like the Wattenmeer tidal flats."
The Mittelplate drilling and production island meets particular safety and environmental protection requirements. The island measuring 70 by 95 metres in size was built in the shape of a rain- and waterproof concrete-and-steel basin with eleven-metre high sheet pile walls on top of a sand bank in the Wattenmeer tidal flats. Nothing can escape from the island unchecked. Even rain and spray is collected and treated on the island. Sophisticated monitoring and control systems provide multiple levels of safeguards for all drilling and production operations. Safety valves installed below and above ground are conveniently accessible and can be activated automatically, manually or by remote control.

In the past 23 years, a total of 900 million euros has been invested in the Mittelplate project, the lion’s share of which in technical innovations, in the pipeline link joining the island to the processing plants onshore as well as in the exemplary safety concept. Mittelplate production has been a key economic factor for the state of Schleswig-Holstein and the Dithmarschen region from its inception. For instance, in the year 2010 alone, the state will receive a production levy of just under 80 million euros. More than 1,000 jobs in the domestic oil production industry are dependent on the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein. “With its long-standing tradition in Schleswig-Holstein, RWE Dea would like to continue to be a reliable partner to the region. In addition to securing jobs, our social commitment will be another important factor,” says Rappuhn. RWE supports vocational training in local operations in the region, along with various schools and the Fontamar wellness and spa centre in Friedrichskoog, amongst other entities, by supplying petroleum gas from the Mittelplate field. Moreover, RWE Dea successfully cooperates on a long-term basis with various universities in Schleswig-Holstein in ambitious research projects in the field of marine and geotechnology.

Further information: [www.rwedea.com](http://www.rwedea.com) and [www.mittelplate.com](http://www.mittelplate.com)

Contact:
Background information

RWE Dea AG, headquartered in Hamburg, is an international company operating in the field of exploration and production of natural gas and crude oil. The company deploys state-of-the-art drilling and production technologies and puts its many years’ experience acquired to good use in its activities. RWE Dea has set new standards in the fields of safety and environmental protection.

RWE Dea has stakes in production facilities and concessions in Egypt, Denmark, Germany, the UK and Norway, and holds exploration licenses in Algeria, Ireland, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Poland, and Turkmenistan. Moreover, in Germany RWE Dea also operates large subterranean storage facilities for natural gas. RWE Dea is part of the RWE Group, one of Europe’s largest energy utilities.